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in time, take away this authority from local government. Now I agree that we should provide flexibility. Where the disagreement, I believe, exists and the reason for the amendment that is before us is that I think the flexibility ought to be at the local level, that if there's going to be flexibility and choices to be made about the most appropriate and effective way to provide services at the local level, that that flexibility ought to be with local decision-makers. So I am opposed to deleting the reference to townships from our constitution. In LB 1114, townships lost the authority to levy a property tax. They now have to and are required...they will have to, in the coming fiscal year, they have not yet, but starting in fiscal year '99 will have to work with the counties in which they are a part of, they will have to work with those county elected officials to receive levy ability. That means there's going to have to be a discussion at the local level as to whether or not townships are an effective means of delivering local services. And it seems to me that if elected officials at the county level determine that they can provide the services that are being provided by their townships and are willing to give them some of their taxing authority to accomplish that, that it is because they can do it and do it either better, or more cost-effective, or both. But, since this is in fact a circumstance where there is adequate local involvement, I believe that we ought to leave townships as they currently are. My last point in my opening, Madam President, would be this, I ultimately want to see a ballot question that allows for merger and consolidation to be approved by the voters of the state. It is my opinion that this component, in LR 45CA, does not enhance the potential that the ballot question will be approved. In fact it is my opinion that including this will cause and did cause before individuals to have a reason to not be supportive of the balance of the ballot question. It's my opinion that if a provision in LR 45CA doesn't enhance the likelihood that it will be approved by the voters, then we should either leave it out and not address it, or address it separately and not combine the two issues. Now, Gage County, one of the four counties in Legislative District 30 that I represent, has township form of government. There was a meeting last year, actually prior to the '96 ballot question, in which elected township board members and officials representing every township in Gage County expressed to me their feeling that this ought not be change in our constitution. That unanimous